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Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7969th meeting
Wednesday, 14 June 2017, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Llorentty Solíz	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mrs. Carrión

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2017/437)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2017/437)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/437, which contains the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

I now give the floor to Mr. Wane.

Mr. Wane: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Darfur. On this tenth anniversary of the Council's decision to deploy the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), I would like to draw the attention of Council members to the joint recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the reconfiguration of the Mission, as submitted in their joint special report on the strategic review of UNAMID (S/2017/437).

A decade has elapsed since the Secretary-General, in his letter dated 5 June 2007 (S/2007/307), proposed the mandate and the structure of UNAMID to the Security Council. Since then, significant developments in the Sudan and the wider region have taken place, and these require that UNAMID adjust to new realities. With this in mind, the Secretary-General recommended, in his letter of 28 October 2016 to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/915), that a joint African Union-United Nations strategic review of UNAMID be undertaken, in close consultation with the Government of the Sudan, in order to provide detailed recommendations to the Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council on the Mission's priorities and configuration. The review took place from 5 to 17 March 2017, and the joint African Union-United Nations recommendations were consulted with the Government of Sudan and interested parties. I would like to briefly introduce the main elements of the proposed reconfiguration.

The report notes that, over the past three years, the armed conflict that gave rise to the deployment of UNAMID has markedly changed, following a successful military campaign by the Government, which reduced the rebellion to a small presence of the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid in Western Jebel Marra. The number of intercommunal and security incidents has also decreased as a result of the efforts of the Government and community leaders, with the support of UNAMID. In parallel, with the conclusion of the national dialogue and the inclusion of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur into the Constitution, progress has been made on the political front.

Yet, as illustrated by an internally displaced person population of 2.7 million, a number of crucial grievances at the origin of the conflict and key issues related to its aftermath are still to be addressed. While security in the State capitals has improved, challenges in other parts of Darfur remain. This is due mainly to the activities of militia groups, unresolved intercommunal disputes over land and other resources, the prevalence of weapons and crime, coupled with the inadequate capacity and effectiveness of the rule of law institutions.

At present, UNAMID deals with two sets of issues that are both related to the root causes of the conflict: first, the continued instability in the greater Jebel Marra area and the displacement in the vicinity; and secondly, intercommunal violence. In view of the that, the joint report proposes a two-pronged approach combining peacebuilding and peacekeeping tasks. Most parts of Darfur require a more peacebuilding-oriented approach, while in the Jebel Marra area and its vicinity the Mission's efforts would focus on traditional peacekeeping tasks and on addressing the emergency

attention arising from the insecurity in the area that prevents internally displaced persons from returning.

This concept — which includes the closure of 11 team sites, the opening of one temporary operating base in Golo, in the Jebel Marra area, and the withdrawal of the military from another seven team sites out of a current total 36 — would enable the Mission to bring the troop ceiling down to eight battalions, from the current number of 16 battalions, or to 8,735 troops, while the police ceiling will be brought down to 2,360, from a current total of 3,403. This would represent a reduction of 44 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, of the military and police authorized ceilings.

(*spoke in French*)

The Mission's priorities still address the main issues at stake and make it possible to contextualize the tasks UNAMID should undertake and where it has the most value added. I would indicate, however, that the report recommends that its priorities be adjusted slightly. In terms of the political process, a stronger focus should be put on the effective implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, which, as I pointed out earlier, is now incorporated in the Constitution and contains useful provisions to address the underlying causes of conflict and to create peace dividends for the population in Darfur. Activities connected with the protection of civilians in the greater Jebel Marra area, in collaboration with the humanitarian country team, will revolve around physical protection and emergency relief, whereas in the rest of the Darfur states civilian-protection activities will focus on livelihood issues and issues related to the police and the capacity to promote the rule of law capacities.

With regard to intercommunal conflicts, the work of the Mission should prioritize those intercommunal conflicts, which have the potential to cause the highest number of casualties, and derail national political processes, while a stronger partnership with the country team is also required to address issues related to seasonal migration and the extension of rule-of-law institutions throughout the territory.

I would like to highlight that the developments I mentioned earlier continue, of course, to be true since the conclusion of the strategic review. The level of armed hostilities is significantly lower than in previous years. The armed movements attempted to reassert their military presence in North and East Darfur in late May and early June, but remain unable to conduct sustained military operations in the face of the military of the Sudanese Government. In response to intercommunal conflict during the migration season, Government authorities at both the local and federal levels, as well as community leaders, supported by UNAMID, undertook preventive measures and endeavoured to reduce the impact of the difficulties encountered, thereby contributing to reduced violence as compared to recent years.

Finally, I would like to say that the reconfiguration of UNAMID is an important milestone towards the completion of its mandate. The successful implementation of that reconfiguration, however, requires the full support and cooperation of the Government of the Sudan and its institutions, including to ensure that there is no administrative or security vacuum in the areas that will be vacated by UNAMID. It is also important to continue to work closely with the country team on issues related to land, the search for durable solutions for internally displaced persons, transitional justice and reconciliation.

I will conclude by pointing that out that it is more necessary than ever that we continue our joint efforts to allow for the achievement of peace and security that the people of Darfur desire so greatly.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Wane for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members that wish to make statements.

Mrs. Carrión (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, let me thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Wane, for his briefing on the special report (S/2017/437) of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

Uruguay notes the report's indication that hostilities between the Government of the Sudan and rebel forces have decreased considerably in recent months, and that the regional climate has improved as a result of greater cooperation with the Central African Republic, Chad and Uganda. It should be noted, however, that one of the main sources of violence persisting in Darfur remains conflicts between communities, which are closely related to the root causes of the conflict and exacerbated by armed militias, as well as by the fact that weapons

are widespread among the civilian population and that the institutions of the rule of law do not yet have the necessary capacity or effectiveness to overcome such obstacles.

Yesterday, the Security Council convened to discuss mine action and the mitigation of the threat of explosive devices (see S/PV.7966). Today, We are addressing conflict in which former battlefields remain contaminated by remnants of war explosives, particularly in Jebel Marra. The Government of the Sudan and the international community must work together to remove all artifacts of war and thereby guarantee the inhabitants the possibility of safe transit throughout their territory.

We are encouraged by the general improvement of the security situation and by recent political developments in the context of the national dialogue. In that regard, we consider it essential that the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements continue to work towards signing and implementing an agreement on a cessation of hostilities and the full implementation of the remaining provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Progress in those areas would undoubtedly create the conditions necessary to effectively addressing the root causes of conflict and contribute to the safe return of more than 2.5 million internally displaced persons from Darfur to their homes.

With respect to UNAMID, Uruguay takes note of the strategic review conducted by a joint team of the African Union and the United Nations, which includes proposals for adjustments to the Mission, taking into account the evolution of the situation on the ground and adjusting the Mission's mandate to the remaining challenges. In this regard, we support the recommendations relating to the Mission's priority tasks, namely, the protection of civilians and the facilitation of humanitarian access, support for the political process, in cooperation with the African Union, and support for addressing the root causes of conflict.

In conclusion, let me express Uruguay's gratitude to all UNAMID personnel, the United Nations country team and the humanitarian workers who continue to work tirelessly, often in difficult conditions, to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Bolivia thanks the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, for his briefing on the special report (S/2017/437) of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

Bolivia welcomes the recommendations contained in the strategic review. We believe that the proposed adjustments to UNAMID duly reflect the gradual evolution of the situation on the ground over the past year. Moreover, the new focus will allow us to adapt UNAMID to the current needs of the population of Darfur. It is worth recalling that the last strategic review was undertaken in 2013, when the situation was quite different from what it is today. Operation Decisive Summer, implemented in 2014, led to a sharp reduction in the level of hostilies between the Government of the Sudan and armed rebel forces, who at the time had a very active presence in the Sudan. With the exception of the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid, their capacities have been significantly reduced over the past few months. We have seen no significant clashes take place since September 2016.

Such improvements in the security situation will allow us to refocus the mandate of the Mission not only on peacekeeping but also on peacebuilding tasks, as suggested in the report. Focusing on peacebuilding will allow UNAMID to help strengthen the State's institutions, train and develop the police, strengthen the rule of law and advance the political process through the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, and in particular through support for the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, which is responsible for the implementation of recommendations on the Sudan. It will also allow UNAMID to address the root causes of the conflict, which is a priority in efforts to achieve stable and lasting peace in the region, which for years has suffered the grave consequences of the conflict in Darfur, in which civilians have been affected most.

On that point, as outlined in the strategic review, the protection of civilians will revolve around the action plan of the Jebel Marra task force. Bolivia naturally believes that it is important to protect the most vulnerable in armed conflicts. To that end, we look forward to close coordination with the Government on that initiative. The composition and mandate of the

Jebel Marra task force must take its suggestions and concerns into account.

However, while we appreciate the aforementioned improvements, the humanitarian situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees remains a source of concern. According to the most recent report of the Secretary-General, there are approximately 2.6 million internally displaced persons, who are exposed to various forms of violence. Women and children are the most affected.

In implementing the suggestions arising from the strategic review, the Government has an opportunity to demonstrate that it is capable of protecting all civilians across the entire country. We hope that progress will be made in the plan for the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and in the initiative for a volunteer cessation of hostilities. We trust that the Government, in line with the progress it has made, will lend the support necessary to UNAMID to fully comply with its mandate, granting it the necessary access to do so, and guarantee support for humanitarian workers so that they can meet their responsibilities.

To conlude, it is important to highlight the fact that if the United Nations country team is to fulfil the duties conferred upon it, the support of the international community is crucial.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report submitted to the Council (S/2017/437). I would also like to thank my friend the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Wane, for his briefing. He knows that we have long worked since 2004 in Aboja to consolidate peace and security in Darfur.

Allow me to extend my sympathies to the people and the Government of Nigeria in the light of the killing of a Nigerian peacekeeper in Darfur. I offer my condolences to his family.

Many reports of the Secretary-General on Darfur — notably his most recent report of 18 May on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), in addition to reports issued by other United Nations entities concerning the situation in Darfur, have affirmed and noted the significant progress made in Darfur in all areas, especially the security and humanitarian situation following the efforts of the Government of the Sudan to secure the five states of Darfur. This has positively affected security and stability. We have long pursued such positive, encouraging and natural progress.

On 20 May, the Sudanese Liberation Army/Minni Minawi from Libya and the Justice and Equality Movement tried to infiltrate our borders from South Sudan in a failed attempt to drag us back into war. Therefore, the cooperation of neighbouring countries, given the successful joint experience of the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic in protecting our shared borders and preventing armed groups from infiltrating, is the only way to end the unrest that has become part of our painful past. I note that the report of the Panel of Experts appointed by the Council, which was reviewed by the Council in February, as well as the report presented today, reach the same conclusion that the Justice and Equality Movement and Sudanese Liberation Army/Minni Minawi have been conducting mercenary activities, including banditry and human trafficking, to finance their activities.

On the other hand, all recent reports note the efforts and role of the Government to counter crime and banditry in Darfur. We have made significant progress in that regard. Further efforts are still being made to promote security and judicial oversight with a view to limiting the phenomenon and establishing State authority. The Government of the Sudan has deployed additional police personnel, with 29,314 officers now deployed across the municipalities of the states of Darfur. The Ministry of Justice has also implemented a plan to appoint district attorneys in each of Darfur's municipalities as a way of promoting the rule of law and justice in urban and rural areas of the state, in addition to achieving the principle of zero impunity and an increase in the number of offices providing specialized and general legal assistance.

Council members are aware that the main reason for insecurity, criminality and tribal violance in Darfur is the proliferation of weapons among civilians. The Government has announced a plan to collect weapons and limit their use to uniformed troops. Initiatives to drive weapons-collection and non-proliferation efforts obviously require large financial resources and qualified and adequate personnel. We therefore expect

the donor States and the United Nations specialized agencies to provide financial and technical assistance to the Sudan so that sustained peace and security may be achieved..

My delegation welcomes the recommendations made by the recent meeting of the joint working group, which were adopted by the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism at the leadership-level meeting on 22 May, which stipulate that UNAMID should withdraw from 14 regions in the state of Darfur. We welcome the recommendations of the report of the strategic review working group included in the joint report by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General, which stipulate that UNAMID's military component should be drawn down by 44 per cent, although we had hoped that the recommendations would stipulate withdrawal from all areas on which the joint working group has reached a concensus. In that regard, we hope that the Council will adopt these recommendations unanimously so that the competent authorities can start the gradual drawdown and transfer the tasks that were conducted by UNAMID to the United Nations the country team in the Sudan.

My delegation wishes to underscore that the Government of the Sudan is fully ready to continue cooperating and positively engaging with UNAMID, the African Union, the United Nations and all other regional and international partners in order for the Mission to be able to fully discharge its duties, complete its departure in a smooth, phased and gradual manner that could be a model for the drawdown of other peacekeeping missions, and save financial resources for preventive diplomacy and sustaining peace and achieving comprehensive development.

We look forward to starting a new, serious phase, which makes it incumbent upon us politically and logistically to reconsider the sanctions that were imposed on the Sudan 12 years ago, in 2005, pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), in clear recognition of the situation on the ground in the country today. This is an inevitable step. We are open to the ideas that the Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations could put forward on this matter.

The humanitarian situation in Darfur remains of interest to the Government of the Sudan, despite the fact that increasing numbers of internally displaced persons are voluntarily returning to their villages. Some internally displaced persons camps are now no longer needed, thanks to the current excellent situation of peace and security, given that efforts made by peace partners in Darfur to build villages for voluntary return, where all basic services for citizens are available. Moreover, security has been restored in the home villages of the internally displaced persons.

All this makes it all the more necessary to pursue domestic and international efforts to encourage voluntary return. On top of that, the Government of the Sudan has put forward a plan to address the situation, comprising three options. The first option consists of internally displaced persons simply returning voluntarily to their villages. The second involves integrating camps for internally displaced persons into nearby cities and doing the requisite planning to provide them with basic services. Under the third option, internally displaced persons will be able to choose an area to relocate that is not their place of origin. Each of these options requires financial resources. The assistance of the international community is therefore needed. We commend the support that has been provided by the State of Qatar, which sponsored the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and has financed many development projects that have enabled us to achieve security and stability. Other friendly countries, such as China, Japan and Turkey, inter alia, have also offered their support within the framework of the Doha Document.

As noted in the report, the most important priority for the United Nations is the return of internally displaced persons and access to the affected enclaves by the remainder of Abdel Wahid's troops in some areas of Western Marah Mountain, since we have managed to preserve the vision of the Government of the Sudan arising from provisions contained in the Doha Document. However, accuracy is essential when counting the number of internally displaced persons in Darfur. We have counted some 1.8 million internally displaced persons, while the figure set by UNAMID stands at 2.7 million.

With regard to access, we reiterate the assertation made in the October joint report of the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations agencies that there is no problem in access. This jibes with the assertion in the report before us that there has been significant improvement in access to the populations of the affected areas. We recall the statement made by the Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs of the Government of the Sudan's to the effect that access to 92 per cent of the regions of Darfur is accessible through

simple notification, which means that there is no need for Government authorization. We maintain our call for information on internally displaced persons to be issued by a single body comprised of the Government of the Sudan, the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations and the African Union.

We thank UNAMID for its efforts in all areas and peacekeepers for their sacrifices of recent years. We also thank the troop- and police-contributing countries and reiterate our readiness to cooperate with all regional and international partners in all matters related to UNAMID until its last contingent leaves the country and full and sustainable peace has been achieved.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.